



The Tidewater News

115TH YEAR, NO. 97

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 31, 2022

\$1.00

BZA approves of drive-in theater for Franklin

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The Franklin Board of Zoning Appeals has approved the use of the vacant lot at 133 South St. as a drive-in theater.

Franklin City Planner & Environmental Specialist Carlee Gurskiy confirmed that this approval came Aug. 24 for Timothy Harris, who is the applicant.

"I'm really excited," Gurskiy said. "I'm all for development of Franklin and bringing activities to Franklin, especially in my age group."

Gurskiy, 25, noted that she grew up in the city.

"There's not a lot of people my age here, and the ones that are, we kind of go to Chesapeake and Virginia Beach and Richmond and all the other big cities, so I'm

really excited for a new activity, a different activity that we don't have that I hope will draw out a lot of people," she said.

Sharing Harris' plans for 133 South St., Gurskiy said he is planning to utilize a portable, blow-up screen.

"The screen will be 20 feet by 40 feet, so it's going to be a temporary structure, really," she said, adding that it will be inflated Thursday or Friday for events and deflated on Sunday. "There's really not going to be any work done to the site."

She said Harris is going to bring in some Porta potties, especially some that are handicap accessible.

"He's hoping to bring in portable lighting to encourage a safe

SEE THEATER, A8

1 of 3

Water main replacement nears bidding phase

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The town of Windsor now has all of the deeds of easement needed for the Duke Street and Virginia Avenue water main replacement, and the Town Council is expected to make a decision in September on sending the project out to bid.



Saunders

In his memo to the mayor and Town Council that was part of the council's Aug. 9 meeting packet, Windsor Town Manager William Saunders wrote that only one deed of easement was still outstanding, but he updated this verbally during the meeting.

"Since the writing of this, (Town Clerk) Terry (Whitehead) has succeeded in getting the final deed of easement acquired," Saunders said. "That would not have occurred without her assistance. I greatly appreciate it."

"And the engineers just got me, mid-week last week, the final set of documents, final set of plans for the project and final set of bid documents to me for the town attorney's and my review. So, what they feel

Best Places for Small Business Owners					
Small Business Income					
Rank	Virginia County	SB Returns	SB Income	Income Taxes	SB Income Index
1	Grayson	32.28%	13.85%	\$9,971	51.83
2	Franklin City	28.49%	13.22%	\$9,971	49.99
3	Richmond	36.11%	13.07%	\$9,971	49.54
4	Augusta	23.87%	11.89%	\$9,971	46.10
5	Fauquier	28.88%	11.88%	\$9,971	46.06
6	Galax City	21.64%	10.52%	\$9,971	42.08
7	Bristol City	26.26%	10.46%	\$9,971	41.89
8	Russell	23.09%	9.72%	\$9,971	39.75
9	Alleghany	28.64%	9.65%	\$9,971	39.52
10	Waynesboro City	20.49%	9.43%	\$9,971	38.88

Sources: Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey, Government Sources, SmartAsset

Franklin, Isle of Wight: Good places for small business owners

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

The city of Franklin and Isle of Wight County are two localities that are among the best places in the state for small business owners, according to an analysis done by SmartAsset.

As noted on its website, SmartAsset is an online destination for consumer-

focused financial information and advice that powers SmartAdvisor, a national marketplace connecting consumers to financial advisors.

The name of SmartAsset's analysis is "Best Places for Small Business Owners," and Franklin ranked No. 2 in the state — and 85th in the nation — within the category of Small Business Income. In the category of

Small Business Returns, Isle of Wight ranked No. 3 in Virginia, while Franklin ranked No. 7.

SmartAsset Public Relations Manager Steve Sabato explained that the Small Business Income category measured the percentage of total reported income in each locality generated by small businesses. The Small

SEE BUSINESS, A8

SEE EXPANSION, A7

Windsor library expansion stalls

BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER

Isle of Wight County has put its expansion plans for the Windsor library on hold after receiving construction bids nearly double the original cost estimate.

County supervisors voted unanimously on Aug. 18 to reject all three bids, which ranged from \$627,000 to just under \$753,000.

The county had allocated \$350,000 in its 2020-21 capital improvements budget to add a manager's office, meeting space and storage to the converted Duke Street house, intending to begin the 1,800-square-foot expansion in 2021. But the project wasn't put out for bids until earlier this year.

According to Tony Wilson, the county's director of public works, the current plans call for a downstairs addition consisting of the manager's office, two bathrooms and an open room with a kitchenette, plus 680 square feet of upstairs space consisting of a meeting room and storage. The work would also entail repainting and replacing the floors, lights and bathroom fixtures in the existing library.

Wilson advised the county may be able to save 10% to 15% by waiting a year and rebidding the project.

"The housing market may slow down, which would give us a better bid value if we, say, shelve it for six



Above is a voter registration card sample

Isle of Wight voter registration cards to be re-mailed

BY STEPHEN FALESKI
STAFF WRITER

Registered voters in Isle of Wight County should be on the lookout for the first and second weeks of September for

new voter registration cards.

The county Voter Registrar's Office mailed new cards to all residents in May following the conclusion of local and state-

SEE VOTERS, A7

Sedley man reportedly speeds, leads police in chase

STAFF REPORT

The Virginia State Police engaged in the pursuit of a Sedley man Friday evening, Aug. 26, after he was allegedly speeding and refused to pull over, hitting multiple police vehicles during the chase. Police took him into custody when the pursuit ended with his arrival at his home.

A VSP news release stated that at about 10:14 p.m., a 2005 Hyundai Sante Fe was observed traveling at a high rate of speed in a 25-mph

zone and passing vehicles on a solid white line in the town of Ivor. A trooper initiated a traffic stop, and the driver refused to pull over, police said. A running roadblock with the assistance of other troopers but was unsuccessful.

"Troopers attempted to stop the vehicle several times using the running road block method unsuccessfully, and in the attempts, the suspect struck the troopers' (three) vehicles in an attempt to escape," VSP officials stated in the

release.

Police said the pursuit ended when the suspect driver, 29-year-old Joshua Ryan Boeving, of the 15100 block of Ivor Road in Sedley, pulled into his driveway/residence and was taken into custody without incident.

Boeving was charged with driving under the influence, no license, reckless driving, and felony elude, the release noted. The case will be taken before the Commonwealth's attorney to determine if further charges are pending.

Man convicted in '18 murder of Franklin man

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

A three-day jury trial in Prince George Circuit Court last week resulted in Erick Obando being found guilty of the 2018 murder of Kenneth Moore, a 36-year-old Franklin man.

The investigation found that Moore had been killed in Prince George, but his body had been brought to Sussex County, where it was discovered Jan. 12, 2018.

Near the end of January 2018, three suspects were taken into custody in connection with the case:

Obando, of Prince George, who was 24 at the time; Christopher Jared Crowder, of Dinwiddie County, who was 18; and a third suspect who was unnamed because he was a juvenile at the time.

SEE CONVICTED, A7

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2021
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DEATHS
Glenn F. Barrett
Corey R. Brozzo
Lena W. Clark
Mary R. Davidson
Georgette M. Kelly
Edna L. King

Loretta D. Faison
Herbert Hunter
Patricia S. Jordan
Ernest E. Sydnor Jr.
Hattie M. Watson
Maryann R. Westhouse

BEST BET
Steak feast: The Boykins Lions Club steak feast is back. The last one was held in 2019 due to COVID. The steak feast will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 7 from 4:30 - 7 p.m. at Draper's Pond. Tickets are available from any Lions or Newsoms Ruritan Club member before the event. No tickets will be sold at gate.

Learn More at:
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Best Places for Small Business Owners Small Business Returns					
Rank	Virginia County	SB Returns	SB Income	Income Taxes	SB Returns Index
1	Richmond	36.11%	13.07%	\$9,971	68.06
2	Grayson	32.28%	13.85%	\$9,971	60.83
3	Isle of Wight	30.48%	5.66%	\$9,971	57.44
4	Fauquier	28.88%	11.88%	\$9,971	54.43
5	Alleghany	28.64%	9.65%	\$9,971	53.97
6	Louisa	28.50%	8.14%	\$9,971	53.71
7	Franklin City	28.49%	13.22%	\$9,971	53.69
8	Lee	28.05%	7.36%	\$9,971	52.86
9	Craig	27.32%	8.49%	\$9,971	51.49
10	Chesapeake City	26.80%	8.19%	\$9,971	50.51

Sources: Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey, Government Sources, SmartAsset

Best Places for Small Business Owners Small Business Index					
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1	Richmond	36.11%	13.07%	\$9,971	54.61
2	Grayson	32.28%	13.85%	\$9,971	52.01
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4	Fauquier	28.88%	11.88%	\$9,971	45.61
5	Alleghany	28.64%	9.65%	\$9,971	41.93
6	Bristol City	26.26%	10.46%	\$9,971	40.82
7	Augusta	23.87%	11.89%	\$9,971	40.66
8	Louisa	28.50%	8.14%	\$9,971	39.47
9	Falls Church City	26.41%	9.16%	\$9,971	38.97
10	Floyd	26.18%	9.28%	\$9,971	38.93

Sources: Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Census Bureau 2019 American Community Survey, Government Sources, SmartAsset

BUSINESS: 'It seems like we have a very strong entrepreneurial base'

FROM PAGE A1

Business Returns category measured the percentage of tax returns in the county claiming small business income.

For Franklin, the analysis puts the city's small business income at 13.22%, behind only Grayson County in Virginia with 13.85% at No. 1. Franklin's No. 7-ranked small business returns in the state are listed at 28.49%.

In terms of the Small Business Index, which combines all of the factors

of SmartAsset's analysis, Franklin was ranked No. 3 in the state at 47.29.

Franklin Southampton Economic Development Inc. President and CEO Karl T. Heck said the city's high ranking in the study is definitely positive.

"It shows a lot of the things that FSEDI and other people in the community have been doing," he said.

Among the things FSEDI has done to make Franklin a more accommodating place for small businesses is administer the STARTUP Franklin Southampton

Program.

An FSEDI news release noted that STARTUP

Franklin Southampton is a grant program that helps entrepreneurs start businesses through business education, developing a business plan, presenting the plan through a pitch competition and awarding prize money to the top business plans. In its four rounds of competition thus far, STARTUP has awarded prize money to 10 businesses that are all still in operation.

STARTUP is a complement to another major FSEDI offering — the Franklin Business Center.

As noted on the FSEDI website, the center is a four-story, 40,000-square-foot, fully renovated and restored mixed-use incubator located in Historic Downtown Franklin at 601 N. Mechanic St. The building houses office space, support staff and programs that nurture young firms and expanding businesses, helping them get started by letting them first incubate in the supportive environment of the center for as many as seven years.

Heck noted that FSEDI works closely with the Hampton Roads Small Business Development Center, and he said that FSEDI Marketing and Existing Business Manager Ashley C. Covington is helping draw tourism to the city, connecting the tourists with small businesses.

"So it's a culmination of a lot of the things that we've been doing for a while that shows up in a study like SmartAsset, which does these things from time to time," Heck said.

He stated that Franklin has a fair number of the kinds of spaces that small businesses can locate in.

"It's relatively affordable to have a business here, and you're reasonably close to kind of bigger markets, so that kind of helps as well that they do have some companies that you can work off of not only in Franklin but in Southampton, Isle of Wight and Suffolk that are reasonably close," Heck said. "Not all of our small



Heck

businesses are retail. Some of them, like I said, they work with those larger businesses as well."

SmartAsset shared the methodology for its analysis with its results, noting that to determine the best places for small business owners, "our study measured three factors: the proportion of people in a county with small business income, the reported business income and the amount of tax a potential resident must pay on their income."

To determine how attractive a region is for small business owners, SmartAsset compared the number of tax returns that report small business income and compared that to the total tax-filing population of the region, the methodology stated. Next, the organization compared the total amount of small business income to the overall amount of income reported in each region.

The methodology noted that small businesses are typically incorporated as pass-through entities, meaning that the business owners pay income taxes on the company profits rather than the company itself paying income tax. Because of this, income taxes can play a major role in determining the financial success of a small business. To determine income tax burdens across counties, SmartAsset used the national median household income and then applied relevant deductions and exemptions before calculating federal, state and local income taxes for each location.

"These three factors were then indexed and equally weighted to yield our Small Business Index," SmartAsset officials stated in the methodology. "Places with the highest Small Business Index are the places which ranked the highest in the study."

In Virginia, the analysis puts Isle of Wight's small



Morello

business returns at 30.48%, behind only Grayson County with 32.28% at No. 2 and Richmond County with 36.11% at No. 1.

"We are very pleased to see this data," said Isle of Wight County Economic Development Director Christopher "Chris" A. Morello. "It indicates on the whole that small businesses are reporting strong earnings in Isle of Wight. Entrepreneurs living and working in the county and in our two towns, they know this is a wonderful place to live, and it stands to reason that they want to do both here."

Morello indicated that he partially interpreted Isle of Wight's high ranking in the Small Business Returns portion of SmartAsset's analysis as "Welcome to the Gig Economy: Isle of Wight Edition." "I think when you view this kind of high ranking with strong gains that we've had in business license issuances, they make sense when viewed together," he said. "What's really important from what we're seeing in the business license data is the subset of home-base business growth. It's really important for our economy, and it's continuing at a very strong pace."

He noted that Isle of Wight has been tracking trends in business license issuances for a while.

"(In) our annual report, for example, we list the total number of new business licenses in the county," he said. "We show that up against the prior year, and we also report business licenses in the county and in the town of Windsor and in the town of Smithfield on a monthly basis with our newsletter, so we have been watching these trends for some years."

But what the county has seen in the last two years has been especially positive, Morello noted.

"We saw a 15% increase

in business license issuances from '20 to '21," he said. "That's great, but year-to-date through June, we're seeing, currently, a 29% increase. So June of '21 versus June of '22, we've seen a 29% increase, and so if that trend continues, we'll have an even stronger 2022 than 2021."

He stated that Isle of Wight County has a lot of growth going on with its residential units and apartments and condominiums and other buildings, which includes out-of-town contractors who are issued business licenses to do their work.

"We haven't teased out exactly what the statistics are, but some portion of that is temporary and out-of-town contractors," he said. "I think if we tease them out, we'd still see very strong proportional year-over-year and year-to-date increases in business license issuances."

Morello also underscored the importance of home-base operations in Isle of Wight's small business landscape.

"We don't have perfect information about this, we're trying to gain a greater understanding working with our towns and the county to derive this, but we know that the number of home-base operations far outnumber the other, more traditional business locations in the county," he said. "I think there's a connection between that data and the SmartAsset analysis."

As for what Isle of Wight, Windsor and Smithfield have done to make the county so appealing and beneficial for small business owners, Morello cited the governments' willingness to help in times of significant need.

"The county and the towns have stepped up to help small businesses with grant programs through the pandemic," he said. "It seems like we have a very strong entrepreneurial spirit from what we learned when we talked to the businesses directly. It's great."

The SmartAsset analysis not only indicated that Isle of Wight was ranked No. 3 in the state in Small Business Returns but that it also ranked No. 269 in the nation. The county's Small Business Index was ranked No. 15 in Virginia.

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THEATER: Could be helpful to other nearby businesses

FROM PAGE A1

environment so people feel safe coming, bringing their cars — they're not out in the dark," she said. "And he's hoping to invite a couple of food trucks every week for concessions."

The drive-in theater will be a seasonal feature, running from March until November, Gurskiy said, noting that the site will open at 7:30 p.m., with movies

starting at 8:30 p.m. and ending at 10:30 p.m.

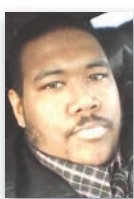
"The BZA approved his use, so at this point, he'll just have to get more of a definitive site plan on where things are going to go, the logistics, so he's over the majority of the hump of the planning process, so he should be able to get started much sooner than maybe he thought," Gurskiy said of Harris.

She also highlighted how the drive-in theater will be a boon to nearby businesses.

"There's some great restaurants right on Main Street and some shops that I think it would be a great one-stop-shop for families and everyone to just come visit Franklin," she said.

JAMES A. AVERY JR.

FRANKLIN, Virginia - James Anthony Avery Jr., 42, passed away on Feb. 28, 2022. He is survived by his parents, Diane Britt and James Anthony Avery Sr. (Antoinette); siblings: Ivory A. Avery



Walker (Terrill) and Giselle W. Britt; nephews: Isaiah Sykes, Taurus Brady Jr., Josiah and Jeremiah Walker and Wayve T. Britt; nieces: Jaliseya Walker, Gabrielle and Grace Novell; his fiancé, Jaceria Lankford and a host of uncles, aunts, cousins, family and friends.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, March 12, at 2 p.m. at Engram Funeral Home, 1001 Armory Drive in Franklin. A funeral service will be held on Saturday, March 19 at Not About Me Minis-

tries, 3106 Branch Avenue, Temple Hills, Maryland 20748. Viewing will be at 10 a.m.; service at 11 a.m.

JOSEPH NATHANIEL MURPHY

FRANKLIN - Joseph Nathaniel Murphy of Artis Street, Franklin passed away on March 1, 2022 in Bon Secours Southampton Memorial Hospital. A public viewing will be held at the funeral home on Thursday from 3 - 7 p.m.

A celebration of life will be held at noon on Friday, March 11 at Move of God Ministries, 221 South Main Street in Franklin with the Rev. Michael Murphy delivering the eulogy; Apostle Tyrone Hart is the pastor. The interment will be held at Southview Cemetery. Service provided by the professional and caring staff of Wm. M. Johnson & Sons Funeral Home Inc., 224 South Main Street in

Franklin. Please share your condolences with the family at wmjohnsonandsons.com.

EVELYN BRADSHAW NEWSOME

FRANKLIN - Evelyn Bradshaw Newsome of Gardner Street, Franklin, passed away March 6, 2022 in her home. A public viewing will be held at the funeral home on Friday from 3 - 7 p.m. A celebration of life will be held on Saturday, March 12 at 2 p.m. at Pleasant Shade Baptist Church, 24030 Delaware Road, Franklin with the Rev. Willis Freeman delivering the eulogy.

The interment will be held at Southview Cemetery. Service provided by the professional and caring staff of Wm. M. Johnson & Sons Funeral Home Inc., 224 South Main Street in Franklin. Please share your condolences with the family at wmjohnsonandsons.com.

johnsonandsons.com.

EMILY GERTRUDE REID

FRANKLIN - Emily Gertrude Reid passed away on March 7, 2022. A funeral service will be held on Sunday, March 13, at 2 p.m. at Scott's Revival Center in Franklin. Arrangements are entrusted to Engram Funeral Home in Franklin.

EDNA M. WHITLEY

CHESAPEAKE - Edna Mumford Whitley, 92, ascended to heaven to meet her Lord on Friday, March 4, 2022. She was born May 1, 1929, the daughter of the late David and Sally Mumford of Burdette, Virginia. Edna was a native of Southampton County and a resident of Chesapeake. She was predeceased by her husband, George Glover Whitley Sr. and her siblings Jimmy Mumford, David Mumford, Jack Mumford, Carl Mumford, Alfred Mumford and Sue Cope-land.

She was a member of Deep Creek Baptist Church, the Dorcas Sunday School class, as well as the Esther Sunday School class. Edna sang with the Joyful Sound Choir and volunteered in the food/clothes closet of her church for many years.

She was a dedicated prayer warrior and each night would sit in the office, look out the window and pray for all her family and friends.

She is survived by her sons, George Whitley Jr., (Marge) of Nags Head, North Carolina and David Whitley (Betty) of Radford; her daughter, Donna Patrick (David) of Chesapeake; sisters-in-law, Margie Mumford and Thelma Mumford; her grandchildren, Travis Whitley (Christina), Carter Whitley (Rachel), Sarah Kate Whitley, Morgan Whitley, Lauren Lee (Michael) and Jessica McGinty (Mac). Her Patrick grandchildren in-

clude Jennifer Ellis (Kevin), David Patrick Jr. (Shannon), Rebecca Patino (Miguel) and Cherie Martin (Phillip). She loved and cherished her 16 great-grandchildren: Theodore, Oliver, Alex, Katie, Hope, Addison, Sydney, Jenna, Jolie, Jinger, Sophia, Christopher, Caleb, Joseph, Ashlyn and Kevin Jr. She left behind a host of nieces and nephews she cherished, along with brothers and sisters-in-law.

Family visitation will be held on Saturday, March 12 at Deep Creek Baptist Church in Chesapeake from 11 a.m. - noon. A graveside service will be held at Poplar Spring Cemetery Saturday, March 12 at 2 p.m. at 825 North High Street in Franklin. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Deep Creek Baptist Church missions, Gideon Bibles or Samaritan's Purse.

www.wrightfuneral-home.org

Starbucks returns to Armory Drive

BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER

Starbucks is expected to be serving customers sometime this summer in Franklin at 1663 Armory Drive, where National Glass had been located previously.

Cecil Martin is the landlord of the property, and Starbucks will be renting from him.

Telling the story of how Starbucks came to occupy the space, he first noted that he was in the glass business with his nephew, Rick Martin, who lives in Franklin.

"He ran it," Cecil said, of National Glass. "I was the silent partner, actually. I live in Richmond."

The business was successful on Armory Drive, "but we didn't really need a retail-type business," Cecil said.

Rick Martin is currently operating National Glass out of his home and can be reached at the same phone number as when the business was located on the property on Armory Drive.

Realizing that the property could be used in another way, Cecil said, "I think about seven years ago, I decided that I would go to Starbucks."

He asked Starbucks to look at the property more than once, but nothing came of it.

Years later, someone called a broker of his in Richmond and said Starbucks was interested in the property. So through his broker in Richmond, Cecil became connected with the man that selects all of the Starbucks locations.

"The one thing I've known about our location is it's the best in Franklin," Cecil said. "It's probably one of the best anywhere because it's got the exit right off of (U.S. Route) 58



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Construction has been progressing visibly at 1663 Armory Drive where a new Starbucks is expected to be operational by early summer.

and Armory Drive, and I just knew that would be a great place for a drive-in coffee shop."

Cecil said he knew Starbucks had been located in the nearby grocery store on Armory Drive that has since gone out of business.

"I thought (Starbucks) did a good job there," he said. "I heard they did."

He noted that Starbucks, which has 39,000 locations, approved the 1663 Armory Drive site, and after some discussions, Cecil suggested he build the new building, to which Starbucks agreed.

The preexisting National Glass building did not match Starbucks' specifications.

"I don't think we could have refitted that to what they wanted," Cecil said. "It sat wrong on the property. They have a long drive around their building. I think it just didn't work for

their design. We didn't mind that. We got a local contractor to take the building down for us before they started."

Cecil said Rick took care of that and has been quite helpful during the whole project.

Emphasizing that construction work is dependent upon conducive weather conditions, Cecil estimated work will be largely completed in another four to six weeks.

"They are working on the wiring today," he said March 8, "so I think they're getting pretty close to the end of the project."

After this work is done, he said Starbucks has three months to come in and finish the interior.

"I think the final Starbucks over here is going to be, really, their latest version, and I think it's going to be quite a bit nicer than the typical Starbucks," he

said, adding that it is going to have an overhang, along with tables, chairs and lights outside, not in an enclosed space but rather one that will allow for outdoor dining when the weather is good.

He was clear that he does not have a date for when the location will be open and operating, but he said he would say early summer.

Cecil noted that Starbucks' representatives have been great to work with, and he also praised the city of Franklin's staff.

"The people in Franklin have wanted the store, and I think that they have treated us well," he said.

He noted that he thinks the new Starbucks will be a good thing for Franklin.

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MURAL: 'Appears to have captured the spirit/history of the area'

FROM PAGE A1

ment as well as a later RockAuto company design.

"I believe I know the interested artist and would be interested in looking at his sketch renditions," Francis said, adding that he is willing to have one of the two walls on his building used for an appropriate mural. "I have visited towns in which murals appear to have captured the spirit/history of the area, reflecting well on the town."

In other matters addressed at the Town Council meeting, Robert-

son reported that COVID-19 outbreaks have caused a slowdown in progress on construction of the Boykins town shop, Edwards said.

"Our contractor is waiting for power and gas to be hooked up before they could paint and do final touches to the building," Edwards said.

In the financial report at the council meeting, it was stated that the general fund balance forward in January was \$200,159.03, and the ending balance in January was \$189,158.55.

Edwards also summarized the police report from Sgt. George Brozzo

for the month of January.

"Sgt. Brozzo reported there were 18 calls for service, three incident reports were required, 31 traffic summons were issued, one criminal summons issued and two arrests," Edwards said. "He also reported that our auxiliary officer resigned."

The Boykins Town Council's March 8 meeting was set to address the passing of Councilman Jerry Rice, who died Feb. 17 at the age of 78.

Edwards said the council would discuss nominating an appointee to fill the vacancy created by Rice's passing.

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We are sending a dove to heaven with a parcel on its wings. Be careful when you open it, it's full of beautiful things. Inside are a million kisses, wrapped up in a million hugs, to say how much we miss you and to send you all our love. We hold you close within our hearts and there you will remain, to walk with us throughout our life until we meet again.

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The Tidewater News

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Prosecution presents case in Hadsell trial



Wesley Paul Hadsell

STAFF REPORT

The jury trial of a Norfolk man accused of killing his stepdaughter nearly seven years ago entered Day 6 in Southampton Circuit Court at the beginning of this week.

Wesley Paul Hadsell, 43, was formally charged on Jan. 14, 2019, with first-degree murder of Angelica "A.J." Hadsell on March 3, 2015. Related to the case, he's also charged with murder — non-capital felony, and concealment of a dead body. He has pleaded

not guilty to all of these charges.

A.J. was a freshman on spring break from Longwood University in Farmville at the time of her disappearance in 2015.

The search took Norfolk Police investigators and a dive team to a pond off Walters Highway/U.S. Route 258 and Joyners Bridge Road in Isle of Wight County on April 4, 2015.

Within the week, Norfolk Police came to Southampton County and told the Southampton County Sheriff's Office of a body found outside a house in the 34000

block of Smiths Ferry Road/U.S. 258. The body was taken to the medical examiner's office in Norfolk, where it was positively identified as that of A.J. Hadsell.

Wesley Hadsell originally had a trial in connection to this matter the week of Feb. 24-28 in 2020, but Southampton Circuit Court Judge Lawson Wayne Farmer was compelled to declare a mistrial.

Southampton Circuit Court Clerk Richard L. Francis told The Tidewater News that Farmer announced Feb. 26, 2020, that an issue had arisen and the jury was

sent out. Essentially, there was a stipulation about what could come into evidence, he said.

Southampton County Commonwealth's Attorney Eric A. Cooke

SEE HADSELL, A8

Courthouse renovation on schedule, on budget

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Southampton County Administrator Michael W. Johnson gave a positive update on the Southampton County Courthouse renovation process to the county's Board of Supervisors during its Jan. 25 meeting, noting it had been a busy month for the project.

"We began moving the occupants and the furnishings and fixtures out of the courthouse on January the 3rd over to Hunterdale Elementary School," Johnson said. "We've got everybody set back up over there."

The elementary school has been modified to temporarily house the Southampton Circuit Court Clerk's Office and the Southampton County Commonwealth's Attorney's Office, and a courtroom has been created in the school's old cafeteria. Circuit Court Clerk Richard L. Francis has noted that jury trials and single-defendant, day-long trials will be held in this courtroom during the renovation process.

Johnson told supervisors on Jan. 25 that the week prior, the



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Pictured is Hunterdale Elementary School as it serves as the temporary courthouse for Southampton Circuit Court jury trials and single-defendant, day-long trials while the Southampton County Courthouse in Courtland is being renovated.

first jury trial to be heard in the school's cafeteria got underway, with Southampton Circuit Court Judge Lawson Wayne Farmer presiding.

"The feedback I've gotten from Judge Farmer [3 of 3] son shared an updated that, all in all, the facility is functioning well," Johnson

said. "We've got a few tweaks we need to make over there, but he's, I think, very pleased with the facility thus far. It's going to be home for them for the next 16 to 18 months."

Johnson shared an update on what is happening at the Southampton County

Courthouse in Courtland.

"The asbestos abatement is underway right now," he said. "They've got to get asbestos floor tiles — those kinds of things — out before the demolition can begin, so that abate-

SEE PLAN, A7

Franklin police investigate Jan. 25 shooting

STAFF REPORT

Franklin Police Department responded to several calls reporting shots fired on Dorchester Street in the early morning of Jan. 25, and the department reported having discovered the gunshot victim after he was delivered to Bon Secours — Southampton Medical Center.

In a Wednesday afternoon press release, FPD stated that it was at 12:23 a.m. on Jan. 25 that the Franklin Police Department Communications Center received several calls for shots fired in the 1600 block of Dorchester Street. Units arrived on scene and began to canvass the area.

"While units were on scene, communications advised the officers that there was a gunshot victim who was dropped off at the emergency

SEE SHOOTING, A8

Drewryville VFD invites help in 'treasure hunt'

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

Drewryville Volunteer Fire Department is seeking help from past members and anyone in the area that may be able to aid it in a historical treasure hunt it first embarked on about five or six years ago.

Fire Chief Wyatt Whitby is leading the effort to assemble a complete, chronological list of all the department's past fire chiefs, including noting how long each person served in the role.

With a complete list that would stretch back as far as 1967, Whitby is hoping to give proper recognition to all of the chiefs for their service by putting the list up at the station.

"This has been our treasure hunt for the last five to six years of just trying to get names," he said. "We've gone through records at the courthouse, trying to find old documents, old pictures. I've gone as far as searching obituaries for people that died back in the '70s to see (if),

SEE HUNT, A8

Job fair creates positive contacts for employers



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Speaking to two visitors at the job fair in Franklin on Jan. 26 are Virginia Beach Police Department officers Austin Chase, left, and Hayden Holmes.

**BY TITUS MOHLER
STAFF WRITER**

The job fair hosted Jan. 26 at Camp Community College's Regional Workforce Development Center may not have been jam-packed with prospective employees compared to previous years, but the slower pace of this year's event allowed for more substantive interactions with vendors, of which 27 were on hand this time.

Fair organizer Michelle Gray said, "I think (the fair) went pretty well considering the obstacles that we had to overcome with COVID. Attendance was down from what we've done in the past, but over a hundred people came, and I think for the coldness of the day and with cases going up, it was a good turnout."

She said she noticed that prospec-

SEE FAIR, A7

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FAIR: "It feels nice to know that we can come out here and speak to everybody"

FROM PAGE A1

tive employees were going into the fair and staying longer this year.

"So it seemed like they were actually having good conversations," she said. "We had one or two prospective employees come out and make comments (like), 'This is the best job fair I've ever been to.'"

Several of the vendors also spoke positively about their experiences at the fair.

Cali Bridgeman, with Heartland Construction Inc., said, "I think, in comparison, this is way better than other ones we've been to."

Other Heartland representatives said they found a couple people that seem "very, very promising," and that was within the first 30 minutes of the event.

Representatives for Noble Care, a nursing agency, said the fair had been great and that it compares quite favorably to other recruitment events they had gone to.

The Virginia Beach Police Department had two officers manning a booth for the department at the event — Hayden Holmes and Austin Chase.

Holmes said he has never been to an event like the Jan. 26 job fair, noting it was "like an actual career fair setting."

"I just did a couple events down at the strip on the

boardwalk and no one really cares (about those events)," he said. "(People are) there to go to the beach. So, to be here actually in an environment where it's centered around branching out, leading your life to a new career field or new job or you're just starting to work..."

"... it's rewarding," Chase said, finishing the thought.

"Yeah," Holmes added. "It feels nice to know that we can come out here and speak to everybody. I like it."

Kenny Pepper and Wesley Dorsey, who helped represent Keurig Dr. Pepper at its booth, spoke positively about the interactions they were able to have at the fair, which ran from 3-6 p.m.

"We have been steady at this table the entire time — from the time it opened until now," Dorsey said near the end of the event. "We've got one really great hopeful, a lady we were talking to that may be able to fill one of our spots if she'll apply for it. She has a lot of experience, background, similar training."

Referring to Keurig Dr. Pepper's presence at the event, Pepper said, "Some of this, too, is just community outreach, just us trying to get our brand out there and let people know, 'Hey, we're actually in Windsor — Keurig Dr. Pepper, right there. Good place to work, good place to be.'"

Keurig Dr. Pepper's location in Windsor is at 25400 Old Mill Road.

Franklin City Public Schools had a booth, and its occupants, Teresa Blackwell and Chris Meissel, were notably upbeat about the fair.

"(We've been) seeing a lot of people, so we're really pleased," Meissel said, adding that there were people interested in substitute teaching, and he also said he and Blackwell spoke to someone who might be able to get the school system an elementary teacher. "So we're definitely going to follow up with her."

City of Franklin representatives Camara Jacobs and Arisha Jones said things had been steady for them at their booth, and they were almost out of applications as 5 p.m. approached.

At the Mid Atlantic Dairy Queen booth, Mark Pierce was representing the company with Brandon Vaughan. Pierce said he has been to this job fair in Franklin about three times.

"I wanted somebody with me today because that last time I came, I bet it was 500 people who came (in the building)," he said.

He noted the number seemed much lower this year, but he also indicated that the event could still bear some fruit for Mid Atlantic Dairy Queen, which has locations locally in Franklin, Courtland and



Mark Pierce, left, and Brandon Vaughan represent Mid Atlantic Dairy Queen at the job fair at Camp Community College's Regional Workforce Development Center on Jan. 26.

TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Windsor.

"I think we might have talked to one or two people that there's a possibility maybe we'll get them," he said.

Sponsors for the fair included the Isle of Wight County Department of Economic Development, Hampton Roads Workforce Council, Franklin Southampton Economic Development Inc. and *The Tidewater News*.



TITUS MOHLER | THE TIDEWATER NEWS

Above: Representing Heartland Construction Inc. at the Jan. 26 job fair in Franklin are, from left, Craig Larson, Cali Bridgeman and Leonard Provost. Left: Representing Keurig Dr. Pepper's Windsor location at a job fair in Franklin on Jan. 26 are Kenny Pepper, left, and Wesley Dorsey.



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PLAN: Have new facility ready by April 2023

FROM PAGE A1

ment process will probably take about another two weeks."

He said that after that, a lot of underground utility excavation will occur.

"On the back corner of

the property nearest the jail is where you'll see the predominance of activity initially, and thereafter they'll begin actually demolition of portions of the structure that are to be demolished," he said. "The game plan is to hopefully

get the new facility dried in by next October and then have it ready for occupancy by April 2023 — still on schedule, still on budget at this point."

There were no questions from the board on the project.

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